

Michigan Content Standards and Benchmarks



The Michigan Content Standards and Benchmarks for Social Studies are predicated on the belief that “Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences to prepare young people to become responsible citizens.” The curriculum builds on four basic tenets:

- ❖ disciplinary knowledge
- ❖ thinking skills
- ❖ commitment to democratic values
- ❖ citizen participation.

In SIRS’ study of the Michigan Content Standards and Benchmarks, we see a direct correlation between the goals and objectives that are emphasized and the framework upon which SIRS Interactive Citizenship has been developed. SIRS Interactive Citizenship content emphasizes the generalizations and concepts that act as the framework for understanding democratic political institutions and their emergence throughout history, while the Discovery and Inquiry activities and related chapter lessons exemplify our commitment to critical thinking skills.

What Citizens Need to Know About Government, addresses the expectations for the study of **Civics** and presents a framework for understanding America’s ongoing struggle to realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution and each citizen’s role in this democracy. Through this framework, students are able to connect the past and the present as well as appreciate universal historical themes and dilemmas by accessing primary sources such as, biographies, documents, diaries, letters, legends and speeches and links to related articles and web sites while focusing on the basic concepts of government. Thus, students develop the higher order thinking skills deemed necessary by the Michigan Content Standards and Benchmarks.

<<http://cdp.mde.state.mi.us/MCF/ContentStandards/>> [2001,December 4]

Michigan Content Standards and Draft Benchmarks
correlation with
What Citizens Need to Know About Government

Draft Benchmark

III. Civic Perspective - High School

Content Standard 1: All students will identify the purposes of national, state, and local governments in the United States, describe how citizens organize government to accomplish their purposes, and assess their effectiveness. (Purposes of Government)

1. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of a federal system of government.
2. Evaluate how effectively the federal government is serving the purposes for which it was created.
3. Evaluate the relative merits of the American presidential system and parliamentary systems.

- *Chapter 2 examines the federal system of government.*
- *Chapter 2 has links to web sites such as A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation and Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids, that allow students to research the federal system and evaluate its effectiveness.*
- *Chapter 1 compares democratic systems such as the American presidential system and the British Parliamentary system. Students may access the British Parliament website for an in depth investigation.*
- *From Chapter 3, students may access the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate web sites.*

Content Standard 2: All students will explain the meaning and origin of ideas, including the core democratic values expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and other foundational documents of the United States. (Ideals of American democracy)

1. Identify benefits and challenges of diversity in American life.
2. Use the ideas of the Declaration of Independence to evaluate the conduct of citizens, political behavior, and the practices of government.

- *Students may read the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and Franklin's Plan of Union by accessing these documents through Chapter 1.*
- *Chapter 3 devotes itself to understanding the Constitution.*

Content Standard 3: All students will describe the political and legal processes created to make decisions, seek consensus and resolve conflicts in a free society. (Democracy in Action)

1. Using actual cases, evaluate the effectiveness of civil and criminal courts in the United States.
2. Explain why people may agree on democratic values in the abstract but disagree when they are applied to specific situations.
3. Evaluate possible amendments to the Constitution.

- *Chapter 7 explores the judicial system, delineating the responsibilities of federal and state courts. Students may read the syllabi, majority, concurring, and dissenting opinions for landmark Supreme Court Cases.*
- *Chapter 9 provides links to significant civil rights cases decided by the Supreme Court.*
- *Chapter 9 details all Constitutional Amendments.*

Content Standard 4: All students will explain how American government institutions, at the local, state, and federal levels, provide the limitations and sharing of power and how the nation's political system provides for the exercise of power. (American Government and Politics)

1. Evaluate proposals reform of the political system.
2. Analyze causes of tension between the branches of government.

- *Chapter 2 explains the founding fathers' plan for separation of powers as well as contemporary interpretations of this structure.*
- *Chapter 10 focuses on state governments and their relationship with the federal government.*
- *Chapter 11 explores the variety of local governments that exist today.*

Content Standard 5: All students will understand how the world is organized politically, the formation of American foreign policy and the roles the United States plays in the international arena. (American Government and World Affairs)

1. Describe the influence of the American concept of democracy and individual rights in the world.
2. Evaluate foreign policy positions in light of national interests and American values.

- *Chapter 28, Foreign Policy, traces the foreign policy decision-making process and examines contemporary foreign policy positions.*
- *U.S. participation in international organizations such as NATO and The World Bank is discussed in Chapter 28.*